Australian Bureau of Statistics

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ABS releases latest Measures of Australia's Progress

A publication designed to help people judge how Australia is doing - economically, socially and environmentally - was released today by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS). The flagship ABS publication *Measures of Australia's Progress: Summary Indicators* provides a suite of indicators which people can use to assess Australia's progress.

Findings include:

Health: We're living longer. A boy born in 2005 could expect to live to 78 (four years longer than a boy born in 1995) while a girl could expect to reach 83 (three years longer than a girl born in 1995).

Education: Australians are now more educated. Between 1996 and 2006 the proportion of 25-64 year olds with a non-school qualification (e.g. a degree, diploma or certificate) rose from 48% to 59%.

Work: Unemployment and underemployment (underemployed people are workers who were ready and willing to work more hours) both fell in the ten years to 2006. The unemployment rate fell from 8.2% in 1996 to 4.9% in 2006. The labour force underutilisation rate (the unemployed plus the underemployed, as a percentage of the labour force) fell from 13.8% in 1996 to 9.8% in 2006.

National wealth: Australia's real (i.e. adjusted to remove the effects of price change) net worth per person rose at an average rate of 1.0% each year between June 1996 and June 2006, reaching almost $237,000 in 2006.

National income: Australia's real net disposable income per person grew at an average rate of 3.0% each year between 1995-96 and 2005-06.

Crime: There was a small increase in the rates of people who had experienced a 'personal crime' (assault, sexual assault or robbery) between 1998 and 2005, from 4.8% to 5.3%. Most of these people were assaulted. The rates of household crimes (break-ins and motor vehicle theft), on the other hand, fell from 9.0% in 1998 to 6.2% in 2005.

Environment: The available data suggests some decline in Australia's biodiversity in the past decade, partly encapsulated in a rise in the numbers of threatened birds and mammal species. Between 1996 and 2006 the number of bird and mammal species which were extinct, endangered or vulnerable rose from 119 to 171 (up 44%). The change was mostly due to increases in vulnerable species. NB: Biodiversity cannot be measured comprehensively and up-to-date data are not available for some indicators.

More details can be found in *Measures of Australia's Progress: Summary Indicators, 2007* (cat.

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